

CREERY WETLANDS CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

FEEDING THE SPIRIT AND BODY

ANIMALS FOUND IN THE PEEL HARVEY ESTUARY RESERVES (English and Nyoongar Names)

BIRDS

Emu: Waitch

Australian Pelican: Beodeelung

Crested Tern: Kaljirgang

Duck: Ngarkan

Black Duck: Oonern

Chestnut Teal: Ngwol-Yi-Naggirang

Hoary-headed Grebe: Wy-ood-Da

Great Crested Grebe: Kali

Little Pied Cormorant: Go-Go-Go

White-faced Heron: Jil-Lee-Mil-Yun

Swamphen: Gullima

Black-tailed Native Hen: Bel-Gar-Be-Jal

Eurasian Coot: Gidd-Jee-Broon

Spotless Crake: Warrajah

Reed Warbler: Goorjee-Goorjee

OTHER ANIMALS

Kangaroo: Yonga

Possum: Koomal

Fish: Djiljit

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Many years ago the Creery Wetlands was once a place of life and colour, it still is today but nowhere near to the extent when it was the height of its glory all them years ago. The Nyoongar people had a great spiritual and harmonic connection to this land. They were also one of the tallest, healthiest, and strongest tribes in the state. This was because their spears were of such great quality being very sturdy and straight.

The wetlands provided a place for the Nyoongars to camp and they would only use materials that the land provided for them. This could have included things such as the fine needle-like leaves of the Grass Tree (Balga Tree), tea-tree (spear wood) branches and paper bark, which of course comes from the paper bark tree. All of these materials would have been used to make a small shelter called a Mia.

It was also a place that had huge abundances of life providing many different foods that the Nyoongars could eat. This included both animal and plant life. The animals that the Nyoongars found favorable to eat were the:

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Spears (kitj) made from the tea-tree branches, boomerangs (karli) made from the branches of the She-Oak and Jarrah trees and tarp knives would have been used to hunt and kill these animals. The Nyoongars never took any more than they needed and nothing was wasted, for example: the kangaroo was hunted for its meat but the bones were used as needles, the sinew as thread and using these materials they would sew two or more kangaroo skins together to make booka's and koodah's, which was a source of clothing for the Nyoongar people.

Plants were also eaten and they were the grass tree, which acted as both a water and food source. You could obtain the water by chewing the white fleshy bases of the young needle-like leaves and the edible Bardi grub was usually found living in the trunk of grass trees. The nuts from the Zamia palm could have been eaten once the toxins were removed after going through a leaching process. Another plant that could have been eaten was the samphire, which was used as a salt replacement and quandongs were eaten as well. Quandongs are small red fruits that have a very large seed in it so you don't get much flesh from it but you could also eat the nut inside of the seed.

The Nyoongar people never camped in the one area all year long. They would always move camp with the seasons so therefore the wetlands also acted as a safe passageway when passing through the area. The Bibbulmun Track also passed through the wetlands.

The Creery Wetlands has an amazing amount of cultural significance to it and it's important that we preserve what's left of the wetlands so that future

generations can enjoy both its historic values and natural beauty for many years to come.

REFERENCES

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